United Nations E/2018/SR.47

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 October 2018

Original: English

**2018 session**
27 July 2017–26 July 2018
High-level segment

**Summary record of the 47th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 18 July 2018, at 3.30 p.m.

*President*: Mr. Mahmadaminov (Vice-President) ..... (Tajikistan)

## Contents

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*)

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*)

*General debate (continued)*

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/).

18-11968 (E)

Please recycle

*In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Mahmadaminov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.*

**Agenda item 5: High-level segment** (*continued*) (E/2018/61)

**(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council** (*continued*) (E/2018/64)

*General debate (continued)*

1. **The President** invited the ministerial meeting to resume its general debate on the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

2. **Ms. Smerkolj** (Slovenia), Minister without portfolio responsible for Development, Strategic Projects and Cohesion, said that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had been born of the need to develop and implement more flexible policies to address global unpredictability. The first set of voluntary national reviews submitted had revealed a great commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also that implementation efforts were insufficient in areas that required wider partnerships, including internationally. In 2017, Slovenia had presented its voluntary national review; in December of the same year, the country had adopted its new National Development Strategy 2030, which was aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The country was now taking the first steps to integrate the 2030 Agenda into its budgetary process and was developing partnerships with businesses and local communities. Slovenia had also updated its development cooperation programmes to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. Development was a continuous process, not a single achievable goal. The world was changing at an unprecedented rate, which required Governments to learn faster and govern smarter. The 2030 Agenda must be a source of hope and action.

3. **Mr. Aumane** (Lesotho), Minister of Development Planning, said that Lesotho was currently finalizing its National Strategic Development Plan, with an emphasis on mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals. New polices focusing on population, housing and gender were aligned with 2030 Agenda, and the Government was collaborating with various United Nations agencies to develop advocacy programmes at the national and community levels.

4. Lesotho was a small mountainous country which provided much of the water used by Southern Africa. It had made substantial progress in terms of national access to water, which now stood at 77 per cent, whilst access to improved sanitation stood at around 44 per cent. The Government was mobilizing resources to develop water and sanitation infrastructure, protect water sources, augment water harvesting and distribution and enhance water access, especially for poor households in urban areas. Lesotho had also begun investing in water and energy feasibility studies to create a pipeline of bankable projects to serve local and regional water and energy demand.

5. Despite significant potential for hydro, solar and wind clean energy production, Lesotho still suffered from a low rate of access to electricity and a high use of bioenergy, especially in rural areas. The Government had therefore embarked on an extensive programme for rural electrification and the promotion of energy-efficient technologies for cooking and heating. It would soon complete a comprehensive energy master plan to direct investment in the sector, with an overall view to greening the economy.

6. Although Lesotho had one of the lowest levels of urbanization in the Southern African region, its urban population was rapidly expanding, which put a strain on infrastructure, including transport, housing, water, sanitation, electricity and health services. The Government was working to attract investment in order to upgrade city roads, introduce smart public transport systems and enhance fire-fighting and waste treatment facilities. Lesotho had also ratified several multilateral environmental agreements, but was faced with the challenges of implementing those agreements due to its low resilience and the prevalence of mountain communities. The Government was therefore finalizing a disaster risk management strategy and exploring financial instruments to manage disaster risks, in part by tapping into existing climate financing mechanisms. Development partners must provide the necessary financial and technical support, while encouraging private investments and further integrating least developed countries and other developing States into global value chains to realize the 2030 Agenda.

7. **Ms. Boulama Kané** (Niger), Minister of Planning, said that the 2030 Agenda could only be achieved by transforming rural communities, developing human capital and promoting the private sector. Niger had launched several national strategies for economic and social development as well as inclusive and sustainable growth. In her country, 80 per cent of the population lived in rural communities, and the rural sector accounted for more than 40 per cent of gross domestic

product. Rural communities must therefore be seen as a pillar of inclusive growth to ensure a viable and resilient society. Agropastoral production must be increased to guarantee food security, increase revenues, create steady jobs for rural youth, empower rural women, ensure access to water, energy and inclusive finance and promote technological innovation.

8. Human capital should be developed through high-quality education and training for all, increased literacy, improved nutrition, access to health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health, and the implementation of a social protection system. Society must be transformed through such investments in human capital, including by tapping into youth, who accounted for more than 75 per cent of the population. The private sector also embodied great potential for economic growth and should be promoted by reducing the cost of energy, transport and information and communications technologies.

9. While the transformation of rural communities, the development of human capital and the promotion of the private sector were essential elements to consider when working towards the achievement of a viable and resilient society, it was also necessary to address security matters, which influenced all development actions. In the Sahel, as insecurity threatened social stability, budgetary resources were increasingly devoted to security. In fact, there could be no development without security.

10. **Mr. Rahimzoda** (Tajikistan), First Deputy Minister of Energy and Water, said that Tajikistan had presented its voluntary national review in 2017, sharing its progress in eradicating poverty and improving the education sector. Although Tajikistan had significant water resources, population growth, climate change and a lack of finance hampered its achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6. Despite national efforts, 40 per cent of the population still did not have access to safe drinking water and, every year, water-related disasters caused enormous economic hardship. Obsolete infrastructures also caused massive losses in water use. To address water issues, the Government had spent $1 billion over the previous 15 years. There were currently 10 projects under way totalling an investment of $350 million aimed at achieving Goal 6. In 2015, Tajikistan had also adopted a water sector reform programme for 2016–2025.

11. His country also worked to advance water issues at the global level. To meet the objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, which had been unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in 2016, Tajikistan had organized a high-level conference attended by over 110 countries, providing a timely and necessary platform for developing recommendations. The Government had established an international water decade centre at the national level and called for more high-level international conferences. Ensuring energy independence was one of the country's strategic goals and was thus aligned with target 7.1. Tajikistan possessed vast amounts of hydropower potential, only 5 per cent of which was currently being exploited. The Government was taking comprehensive measures to balance the production and consumption of energy by modernizing its hydropower plants, creating new facilities for generating power and passing new energy legislation.

12. The Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000 project) marked a positive new development in the Central Asian region, including the resumption of operations to reconnect his country's energy system with a unified Central Asian system. The project was the key to unlocking the country's hydropower with a view to supplying green electricity to neighbouring countries, thus contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 in the region. Rapid population growth and urbanization meant that demand for basic services would continue to increase in years to come; Tajikistan had therefore begun developing master plans for all its towns and cities to ensure that everyone had access to affordable housing, water and sanitation services, electricity and sustainable transport.

13. **Mr. Naughten** (Ireland), Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, said that Ireland had just presented its first voluntary national review with the help of two youth delegates. The efforts of all communities were needed to achieve the transformative vision outlined in the 2030 Agenda and embodied by the Sustainable Development Goals. By working together while acknowledging sector-specific challenges, the transition to a sustainable future would be possible.

14. Ireland recognized the valuable contribution of civil society to the achievement of the Goals and strongly supported the participation of all stakeholders. In its voluntary national review, the country had acknowledged that its Government must do more, in the hope that being honest about the challenges it faced would help to galvanize efforts.

15. A 500-million-euro Climate Action Fund had been created; at 126 euros for every man, woman and child in Ireland, it was the biggest per capita fund of its type in the world. Ireland had also pledged 1.2 million euros to

support the Great Green Wall project aimed at combating desertification in the Sahel. Irish legislators had moreover just taken the first steps towards divesting from fossil fuels at the national level.

16. The responses to cross-border challenges must be collective. His country appreciated hearing from other States with diverse national circumstances.

17. **Mr. Mnatsakanyan** (Armenia), Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that institutional strength and good governance were critical for ensuring peaceful, prosperous and sustainable futures for all. As such, Sustainable Development Goal 16 continued to be an overarching priority for Armenia as part of its reform agenda. The Government had developed an institutional framework to align the country's national priorities and strategies with the Goals, a process that was complemented by ambitious reforms and the launching of new special platforms for cooperation between the Government and the United Nations country team.

18. Armenia valued the contribution of civil society to public life and promoted the role of civil society at the global level in addressing developmental and humanitarian issues. As a middle-income developing country with a challenging mountain environment, Armenia prioritized climate change and disaster risk reduction strategies. In 2017, the country had adopted a national disaster risk reduction strategy that translated the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals into tangible measures for sustainable, risk-informed and disaster-resilient sectoral development. Armenia welcomed regional dialogue and cooperation with a view to integrating disaster risk reduction priorities into development policies.

19. In June 2018, Armenia had hosted the Subregional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction for Central Asia and the Caucasus, which had focused on promoting effective public-private partnerships for risk-sensitive investment. The relevance of regional and subregional cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda could not be overemphasized, as it was the basis not only for advancing mutual interests among neighbouring countries, but also represented an important confidence-building measure in situations of unresolved conflict. Such cooperation could also promote peace and security, as well as economic growth.

20. In sharing its voluntary national review the day before, Armenia had highlighted the important role of partnerships for innovation. In that context, the country had organized, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and the International Organisation of la Francophonie, a high-level panel on the role of innovation and social enterprise. Armenia enjoyed close cooperation with its Francophonie family, which translated into significant partnerships in the realms of sustainable development, digital technologies, youth and innovation. It looked forward to hosting the seventeenth Francophonie Summit in October 2018, which would include an economic forum bringing together entrepreneurs, members of the business community and representatives of international and regional economic organizations to discuss major regional and international economic challenges and promote good economic relations.

21. Over the previous year, Armenia had undergone a peaceful transformation and a change of government; it had begun a comprehensive reform programme with a strong focus on democratic governance. The current Government had received a very strong mandate from its people to continue with the reforms aimed at strengthening the justice system and the rule of law while increasing opportunities for all.

22. **Mr. Santana** (Dominican Republic), Minister of Economy, Planning and Development, said that his country was a small Caribbean island State which had undertaken massive efforts to ensure social and economic development and strong economic growth for over two decades; now classified as an upper-middle-income country, the Dominican Republic had managed to reduce poverty, maintain a high level of macroeconomic stability and ensure a peaceful and democratic environment. However, the country still faced a number of challenges related to poverty, social security, public insecurity, teenage pregnancy, maternal and infant mortality, gender-based violence and inequality and informal labour.

23. With a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, his country had established the High-level Inter-institutional Sustainable Development Commission. The private sector, academia, local governments, civil society and the national congress were all active stakeholders in the process of achieving the Goals, which were largely aligned with the country's own national development strategy for 2030.

24. With the support of the United Nations system, the Dominican Republic had conducted a study aimed at mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support wherein the national priorities stemming from the Sustainable Development Goals had been established as: lowering the rate of multidimensional poverty; generating jobs and enhancing competitivity; promoting sustainable consumption and production; increasing resilience to climate change; and ensuring stable and inclusive institutions. Presented in 2018, the country's voluntary

national review had focused on the issues of multidimensional poverty and sustainable consumption and production.

25. **Ms. Orelope-Adefulire** (Nigeria), Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria, said that one of the critical challenges facing all African countries, including Nigeria, was the provision of sustainable basic services, particularly water supply and sanitation services. Therefore, Nigeria was actively working to transform its water utility sector. Since 2004, the Government had supported an urban water supply and sanitation sector reform; it had recently approved a national water, sanitation and hygiene action plan. The country had also declared a state of emergency regarding water, sanitation and hygiene services.

26. For many years, land degradation, drought and desertification had hindered sustainable development on the African continent. The Sahara Desert was currently advancing southwards at an alarming rate. One consequence was that Lake Chad, one of the largest freshwater lakes, had shrunk by 95 per cent, causing economic hardship for millions of families that had relied on those water resources; there were alarming predictions that the lake would dry out completely within 20 years. Nigeria was cooperating with other countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to construct 2,500 kilometres of navigational channels from River Ubangi in the Congo Basin to recharge Lake Chad. Those efforts would require an unprecedented level of practical cooperation by Member States, as well as technical cooperation, investments and financial partnerships. In 2016, the Sustainability, Stability and Security in Africa initiative had been launched; it aimed to stabilize risk in the region by creating new jobs for the most vulnerable populations through large-scale investment, land rehabilitation and sustainable land management.

27. **Ms. Elsaid** (Egypt), Minister of Planning, Follow-up and Administrative Reform, said that her country had been among the first to adopt a national plan for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Vision 2030, launched by Egypt in February 2016, involved both the private sector and civil society, and had already produced positive indicators that had exceeded expectations and were being reflected in inclusive growth and increased competitiveness. A number of national infrastructure projects were not only stimulating the Egyptian economy, but also providing decent jobs, including for women and youth. Further details could be found in her country's voluntary national review, which it had just presented to the high-level political forum the previous day.

28. The entire world, but particularly the Middle East and North Africa region, were facing challenges to development resulting from rapid economic and political change. Meeting those challenges would require an international solidarity that the United Nations was particularly well equipped to coordinate. South-South and North-South cooperation were also needed, as were exchange of expertise, technology-sharing, funding mechanisms and foreign direct investment. Her country was heavily engaged in international cooperation on sustainable development, and, as current Chair of the Group of 77 and China, had organized a number of side events at the forum.

29. **Mr. García** (Uruguay), Director of the Office of Planning and Budget, said that Uruguay remained strongly committed to the 2030 Agenda. The involvement of public and private stakeholders in that framework was an opportunity to mobilize joint action around common goals in Uruguay in order to improve quality of life and build a more inclusive, environmentally sustainable and economically viable future for all. As highlighted in its voluntary national review presented the previous day, the Government had been working since 2017 to raise awareness and disseminate the Sustainable Development Goals throughout Uruguay, marked by the hashtag #Uruguaysumavalor.

30. Regarding Sustainable Development Goal 6, access to potable water and sanitation for all was a fundamental human right enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic. In Uruguay, over 99 per cent of the population had access to water and electricity. In that regard, Uruguay had positioned itself at the forefront of the use of renewable energy worldwide. The key to its success in that area was a long-term State policy and a solid institutional and regulatory framework.

31. Sustainable Development Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable was being implemented around three thematic areas: social inclusion and well-being, sustainability and climate change, and urban governance. Less than 10 per cent of the population of Uruguay lived below the poverty line. To foster resilience and mitigate natural disasters, early warning systems had been developed. Greater focus was being placed on risk analysis and a national climate change policy had been approved. Coordinated work had been done across institutions to promote regional management in urban systems with broad participation from civil society organizations.

32. Regarding Sustainable Development Goal 12 on ensuring responsible consumption and production

patterns, Uruguayan regulatory frameworks and public policies promoted the sustainable management of water resources; the responsible and sustainable use of soils and surface water; and the use of clean technology, waste reduction and reusable packaging, among other initiatives. The circular economy, cleaner production and improved environmental performance in manufacturing industries were promoted through a variety of programmes. On 17 July 2018, his country had participated in the launch of an international high-level alliance on the management of chemicals and waste in cooperation with the Government of Sweden.

33. Regarding Sustainable Development Goal 15, progress had been made on the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems through the national biodiversity strategy and the strategic plan for the national system of protected areas.

34. **Mr. Berdimuhamedov** (Turkmenistan), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that Turkmenistan had been among the first countries to formally adopt the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, 148 targets and 194 indicators.

35. A national monitoring body had been established under the Ministry of Finance and Economy to review the achievement of the Goals and prepare reports. Moreover, the Government had signed the Partnership Framework for Development with the United Nations for the period 2016–2020 to integrate the Goals into the country's National Programme on Socioeconomic Development for 2018–2024, taking into account local peculiarities and priorities. The Training and Methodology Centre for Sustainable Development Goals served as a platform for training and raising awareness about the 2030 Agenda. Businesses, academia and civil society, including organizations for women and youth, all made a significant contribution to sustainable development.

36. Turkmenistan would report its progress through its national voluntary review during the high-level political forum in 2019. As a member of both the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Turkmenistan attached particular importance to cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, which played an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

37. **Mr. Kadel** (Nepal), Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission, said that Nepal had focused on the timely, effective and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda since its adoption and on its synergy with other programmes of action, including the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Least Developed Countries.

38. Nepal was a landlocked, mountainous and least developed country emerging from conflict and from the devastating earthquake of 2015 and other natural disasters. As such, it had high hopes for the high-level political forum. During its voluntary national review in 2017, Nepal had highlighted its progress and unique challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that context, in its 2018 report (E/2018/33), the Committee for Development Policy had recommended that the consideration of Nepal for graduation from the status of least developed country be deferred until 2021. The country had only progressed by approximately 50 per cent towards the required income threshold for graduation and other vulnerabilities were high. His country had always focused on smooth and sustainable graduation.

39. Nepal was making all-out efforts to fully implement the inclusive and rights-based Constitution promulgated in 2015. Accordingly, three elections had been successfully held at the local, provincial and federal levels. With political stability achieved, the focus had shifted to economic prosperity under the Government programme entitled "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali".

40. The Government had set a target to increase basic water supply and improve sanitation coverage to 95 per cent by 2030. To that end, it had established a dedicated ministry for water supply to holistically deal with water and sanitation issues. Programmes were in place to reduce inequalities and increase the percentage of households living in safe housing to 60 per cent by 2030. Sustainable production and consumption patterns were also a high priority for his Government. Regarding terrestrial ecosystems, Nepal aimed to maintain 55 per cent of its total land as forest and 23 per cent as protected areas to protect its endangered species of flora and fauna.

41. The current level of global cooperation and business as usual fell far too short. All means of implementation for development, including official development assistance and technology and capacity-building, must be strengthened, especially for least developed countries and landlocked least developed countries. While Nepal was committed to doing all that it could, including through foreign partnerships and in the public, private and social sectors at home, it looked forward to increased cooperation from all international partners for necessary industries, technology and other policy supports. The credibility of the high-level political forum would be defined by its ability to provide

leadership to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda through system-wide coherence in sustainable development programmes and policies.

42. **Mr. Sánchez** (Panama), Vice-Minister of the Environment, said that his Government had rolled out a number of actions focused on the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with active participation from the broadest sectors of society.

43. Panama was committed to a national process of awareness-raising and empowerment, which coincided with the review and follow-up process of the 2030 Agenda through the high-level political forum. On 2 July 2018 the Government had launched a "Sustainable Development Goals Month" promoted from the highest political level. The campaign was using influential spokespersons called Ambassadors for the Sustainable Development Goals in an effort to connect more people with the 2030 Agenda.

44. The Government had managed to break out of old paradigms in its environmental and social management. Through cross-sectoral efforts, the Sustainable Development Goals had been aligned with the State strategic vision plan, Panama 2030. Some important milestones were the creation of the Ministry of the Environment in 2015 and the optimization of State environmental financing through the Water, Protected Areas and Wildlife Trust.

45. With regard to Sustainable Development Goal 6 on safe water and sanitation, the Government had drafted a national water security plan for the period 2015–2050, which prioritized the protection of ecosystems and the country's 52 water basins. It had also established the National Water Council to implement that plan. Under Goal 15 on terrestrial ecosystems, a reforestation programme had been established to restore one million hectares of degraded forest and to protect the country's water sources and biodiversity. Lastly, the State had committed to allocating $15 million of its annual budget to the financing of reforestation projects.

46. **Ms. Luveni** (Fiji), Speaker of Parliament, said that Fiji was firmly committed to the Sustainable Development Goals and had used them as the framework to define its country vision within one year of their acceptance by the General Assembly. In 2019, Fiji would present its voluntary national review. Her delegation was convinced that the Goals would be achieved by 2030 despite the challenges that remained.

47. Those challenges were shared with many countries and included difficulties in accessing grant and concessionary financing. The ambitions of smaller island States and landlocked countries required private sector financing as they could not be met through domestic resources and concessionary loans alone. Fiji had therefore issued its first green bond to support its commitments.

48. It was urgent for the United Nations system to work to reduce risks such as climate change that threatened achievement of the Goals. Island States were the most exposed to climate change. Severe weather and frequent flooding destroyed agriculture and livelihoods. Acidification, overfishing and illegal fishing, rising sea levels and warming waters adversely impacted communities. Climate and oceanic shocks must be tackled as they could wipe out the gains made in achieving the Goals. Innovations in financing, new technologies, and domestic and global partnerships were more important than ever to speed up progress.

49. Parliaments played a pivotal role in maintaining focus on the Sustainable Development Goals, but they needed good data to evaluate progress. Fiji welcomed the support provided through the United Nations Development Programme and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and looked forward to an even stronger partnership going forward.

50. Women and youth were at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals in developing interventions, defining challenges and proposing solutions. Above all, the Goals must work for them. Women and youth must be at the heart of the journey towards achievement of the Goals.

51. **Mr. Chibis** (Russian Federation), Vice-Minister of Construction, Housing and Utilities, said that in recent years the Russian Federation had once again made international sustainable development assistance a key component of its foreign policy. In late 2017, aggregate Russian assistance had surpassed $1.2 billion, one quarter of which was funnelled through the United Nations development system. The Russian Federation not only donated its expertise but also provided financial assistance for projects in such areas as health care, education, environment, food security and socioeconomic development with an overall emphasis on poverty eradication. Priority attention was given to the modernization of trade and economic infrastructure and industry and to cooperation to combat terrorism and organized crime.

52. Nationally, measures were being implemented to enhance the quality of life of the Russian people, which was fully in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Such measures were particularly timely in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and in the light of the New Urban Agenda. A government housing

initiative launched in 2008 had enabled over 1 million people to move into modern apartments. A large-scale renovation project, with the owners themselves as key investors, had also modernized more than 120,000 residences in apartment buildings over the previous four years.

53. Despite the difficult climate conditions, the number of interruptions to water and heating services had been significantly reduced in recent years. Such improvements were also the result of proactive development of public-private partnerships, concessions and the introduction of cutting-edge technology.

54. A project was being launched to digitize Russian cities. Russian computer programmers were among the best in the world and their assistance would enable the use of digital technology to implement the concept of the smart city. A major project for the beautification of towns and cities had been launched to provide a safe and comfortable environment for all; its results were visible in Moscow. A referendum had been held on the beautification project and 18 million citizens had voted in favour.

55. Athletics infrastructure was an important element of comfortable cities. The 2018 Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA) World Cup had just been held in Russia. That had significantly contributed to beautifying 11 cities. Russia hoped that the spirit of the 2018 FIFA World Cup, which had brought together millions of people around the world, would be reflected at the United Nations to advance urgent development priorities.

56. **Mr. Flomo** (Liberia), Deputy Minister for Economic Management, Minister of Finance and Development Planning, said that economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters were inimical to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and developing countries were the most vulnerable to those events. The theme of "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies" was therefore particularly important because it drew attention to the devastating effects of external and internal shocks and highlighted the need to formulate ways and means of reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience. The Secretary-General's report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2018/64) provided an opportunity for all to collectively appraise the current situation and challenges.

57. Those challenges included issues related to Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7 and 11. Too many people still lacked access to safe water and proper sanitation facilities. Countries faced difficulties in formulating national priorities and policies to deliver energy for all. Much work remained to remedy the lack of adequate housing and resilient infrastructure, while vulnerability to disasters persisted and environmental impacts remained unaddressed.

58. To ensure achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of Liberia had adopted a transformative development plan called the Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, which would address basic needs for income security and provide better access to services and opportunities for self-improvement in an inclusive and stable enabling environment. The plan had four overarching aims that considered the Goals in the context of Liberia and sought to draw all Liberians at home and abroad into the national development process. The aims were to empower the people through the reduction of developmental inequalities; achieve economic stability and create jobs through effective resource mobilization and prudent management of economic inclusion; sustain peace by promoting a cohesive, sustainable and united society; and, through good governance and transparency, create an inclusive and accountable public sector for shared prosperity.

59. His delegation reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and looked forward to its successful implementation to move the world in a direction that was beneficial to all.

60. **Mr. De Laiglesia** (Spain), Vice-Minister of International Cooperation, Ibero-America and the Caribbean, said that, at a difficult moment for Spain, the 2030 Agenda was triggering an unprecedented mobilization of efforts and had brought about broad consensus in his country in support of transformation towards a more sustainable and resilient society. As Spain prepared for its first voluntary national review, it was more committed than ever to the Sustainable Development Goals. On 29 June 2018, the Cabinet had approved the action plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with the commitment of the 17 autonomous communities and local governments. The plan contained a summary of the situation of citizens, civil society groups, businesses and universities. The new Government that had taken power in June 2018 had made the 2030 Agenda the centrepiece of its policies and had taken immediate action to implement it.

61. The new Government had appointed high commissioners for the 2030 Agenda and for the fight against child poverty. It was also leading by example in the fight for gender equality: most of the ministers of the new Government were women. A Ministry for the Ecological Transition had been created, bringing

together the ministries in charge of energy, environment, water and climate change. Regarding commitments with the European Union on compliance with the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, there had been a transformation from a conservative position to the most ambitious position. The Ministry of Equality, which had previously been eliminated, had been restored under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister. Those changes demonstrated the commitment of Spain to place the 2030 Agenda at the centre of its identity in the world and of its European and multilateral policy. The leadership provided by the United Nations system was key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Spain reiterated its firm commitment to the reform of that system pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/279.

62. **Mr. Nguyen** Phuong (Viet Nam), Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment, said that the 2030 Agenda expressed the determination of global leaders to take the bold and transformative steps needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. His delegation noted the progress made worldwide in the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

63. Reform, innovation, creativity and economic restructuring were setting his country on a path to prosperity. Internationalization of production enabled global and regional cooperation and integration for sustainable development. New advances in science and technology were paving the way to bring humanity to a higher level of development. However, poverty, discrimination, humanitarian crises, epidemics and climate change still threatened the livelihoods of billions of people. Recent uncertainties and inward-looking policies posed challenges to global economic interests and processes, undermining sustainable employment and livelihoods, inclusive and sustainable industrialization and efficient use of resources. Rapid urbanization was burdening many societies in managing population growth, providing adequate housing and resilient infrastructure and addressing environmental issues.

64. Among the challenges in building sustainable and resilient societies, his delegation wished to underscore the lingering armed conflicts, violent extremism and soaring inequalities that continued to threaten peace, security and stability in many regions of the world. Experience had shown that peace and stability were prerequisites for sustainable development. States must do their utmost to ensure peace and security at the national, regional and international levels on the basis of respect for international law.

65. Sustainable and resilient societies must regain balance after disruption and crises, but also transform and develop solutions in order to cope with present and future challenges. Countries must begin by transforming themselves while leaving no one behind. Viet Nam would use its domestic resources and mainstream sustainability into its development vision, strategy and policy with its people at the centre. As success could be achieved only with stronger global partnerships, developed countries must uphold their responsibility and take the lead in assisting developing nations in achieving the Goals, especially through financing capacity-building and technology and through trade facilitation. Viet Nam was committed to sparing no effort in pursuing sustainable development.

*The meeting rose at 5 p.m.*